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Letters

Sober Perspectives

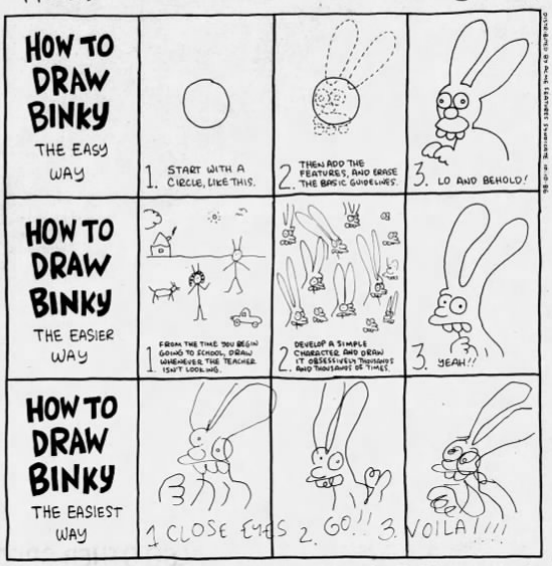
Dear Editor:

I am absolutely outraged over your decision to print "Drug Mania" [cover stories, *L.A. Weekly*, Oct. 3-9]. Your insane support of drug use, including examples on how to get out of being caught by the authorities, is very irresponsible and disgusting. These articles seem to have been submitted by drug addicts. They were poorly written and contained wildly false assumptions and fabrications concerning the "safety" of taking drugs. Your magazine and these authors have no right to print such untruths and generalities. It is purely lying to the public, and is heavy abuse of "freedom of the press." You are using your abilities as a public medium to aid and encourage the destruction of lives.

I am not a mother; I am not a politician. I am an 18-year-old high-school student who feels that you are guilty of supporting the destruction of the environment in which I live every day and work to change for the better. You should take another look at the quality of your magazine and the city you claim to represent.

—Julie Kirschner
Los Angeles

LIFE IN HELL



Dear Editor:

It has been a while since I picked up a newspaper. Looking over your issue on "Drug Mania," I was pleased to see that someone was at last calling for sanity. But I was also disappointed in several respects.

First of all, the American drug problem is always presented in a sociopolitical vacuum, without a history, as though it just sprang into existence without purpose or reason — just a bunch of folks who like to get high, and (alas!) it's bad for you. No one bothers to point out that most of America's drug problems can be directly traced to its race problem. (Yes, for those of us of color, especially blacks, race is still an issue.) Drugs were introduced into the American Indian and black American subcultures as control mechanisms to keep "us" oppressed. This method is still being practiced by the dominant culture (mainly white) in other parts of the world, and the failure of your normally aware publication to place more emphasis on this aspect of the drug trade is a letdown.

Second, where did you find your so-called drug expert who ranks alcohol in the same "dangerousness" category as PCP, cocaine, etc.? I have no argument when alcohol is compared to marijuana, but the rest is silly. What these drugs do to interpersonal relationships — and the rapidity with which these drugs are able to destroy — makes alcohol seem inconsequential. And, by the way, has anyone noticed how many young women in their 20s and 30s are coming up with strokes [after] smoking this stuff? And why isn't the media educating potential victims on the symptomatology of drug-induced strokes? Your expert didn't sound very expert to me.

Third, has anyone except me noticed that crack/cocaine and a few other highly touted highs cause sexual impotence? (If that isn't an incentive for staying away from drugs, I don't know what is.) Why isn't this aspect of drug addiction addressed more vocally in the white media? I'm surprised at how few people know about this.

Fourth, I am acquainted with a young black man who has become hooked on coke/crack on the job as a result of being supplied free for an "introductory" period of time by his *white* supervisor. I resent the implication that young blacks are the main source of the problem.

—Wanda Coleman
Los Angeles

High *Times*

Dear Editor:

Jay Levin's "Open Letter to *L.A. Times* Staffers" was terrific. Not so much because Levin's article was extremely well written or because Levin's needling of the *Times*' employees was so on target. The thing that excited me was seeing the editor in chief of L.A.'s major alternative newspaper show that he really cares about what's happening in this country — and doing something about it. It's always invigorating, in these dismal Reagan days, to be reminded that not everyone is willing to lay down and play dead.

—Jeff Cogen
Los Angeles

Just Two Questions

Dear Editor:

After reading your very informative, very interesting and very one-sided "Filthy Meat! An Expose of a Major USDA Scandal" by Chela Zabin [*L.A. Weekly*, Sept. 19-25], I have two questions for Vernie Gee, Eduardo Delgado, Dr. Carl Teleen and others:

1. Are they all now vegetarians?
2. Where *can* the consumer buy good meat?

—Joseph Chism
Los Angeles

Lynch Pinned

Dear Editor:

Re: John Powers' "Last Tango in Lumberton" [*L.A. Weekly*, Sept. 12-18]. First off, an admission: David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* is indeed fascinating: fascinating as a case history, the case history not of small-town America, but of *a* small town in America. As a vehicle bearing universal meaning, *Blue Velvet* is somewhat of a riderless horse. As a movie, as an expression of Lynch's vision — yes, as a work of art, however minor — *Blue Velvet* says more about its author than about the reality he wishes to portray; as much as Norman Rockwell's eupeptic glosses said about Norman Rockwell.

Although I am not an advocate of legislating that artistic vision be "politically correct," I am at a loss to understand Lynch's moral choice. Were *Blue Velvet* a documentary, one would ask Lynch on what facts, instances, cases he based his nightmarish portrait of small-town America. No doubt there are increasing instances of sexual violence, of what Powers calls the "insoluble riddle of love and sex, good and evil," painstakingly documented on an everyday basis in our daily newspapers. But does all of this "evidence" mount up to a case for a cultural loss of self, for a society at the end of its psychological tether? Or are these sad, lonely truths about sad, lonely individuals, at a loss to explain themselves to the world or the world to themselves — "world alienated" individuals, as Hannah Arendt said — living lives "without a bannister" and acting accordingly?

Wittgenstein may have been right — calling something a dream does not change anything. More, it doesn't change anything for the *dreamer*. Having dreamt other dreams, am I to be held accountable for Lynch's — or, for that matter, Powers' — dreams? Shall I hold Lynch and Powers accountable for mine?

—Dana Gorbea-Leon
Los Angeles

And Then Some

Dear Editors:

Thanks so much to Michael Ventura on 8½. [Taking the Walk That Took Me," *L.A. Weekly*, Oct. 3-9]. He's so revealing, so truthful, so inspiring — not just about the movie or Fellini, but about his own life, and life itself. This is about as good as it gets. Thanks also to Jay Levin for his piece on the *L.A. Times* ["An Open Letter to *L.A. Times* Staffers," *L.A. Weekly*, same issue]. The hypocrisy of the *Times* editorially opposing the very thing it is itself subjecting its employees to is staggering, shocking.

It's all part and parcel of what's building up to be the final countdown — for everything. Period. It's up to everyone with any understanding to act appropriately. Ventura and Levin are doing so, and then some. Godspeed!

—Ron Maxson
Northridge

Snob Row

Dear Editor:

I must say I found it interesting that you singled out Vertigo as an especially pretentious and stupid nightclub in your Best of L.A. issue. I must say I couldn't agree more. However, I found the level of invective in your description a bit curious. Snobbery comes in many forms. Your frequently mentioned favorite spots (nightclubs and music houses) in the L.A. Dee Da column are also pretentious in their own way. I guess the moral is that it's better to be a trendy art-punk-sophisto than to be a monied, coke-hungry materialist.

—Jeff Softley
Hollywood

John Who?

Dear Editor:

I just had to write to tell you thanks for being an incredible, fantastic paper! The Best of L.A. last week and this week's issue are outstanding.

Thank God we have you as a spokespaper. Otherwise the helplessness, the powerlessness and the despair would be too overwhelming.

For all of your fine and sensitive writers such as Jay Levin, Richard Meltzer, Art Fein, John Dentino and all the rest of the staff, deepest gratitude for helping keep our sanity.

—M. James
Los Angeles

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